## Food Safety During a Power Outage





The City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services offers these tips to help you prepare for and cope with a sudden loss of power.

## **Food Safety**

If power is out for **less than 4 hours**, then food in your refrigerator and freezer will be safe to consume. While the power is out, try to keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed to keep food cold for a longer period of time.

## If power is out for more than 4 hours, follow these guidelines:

- For the freezer section: A freezer that is half-full will keep food safe for up to 24 hours. A full freezer will hold food safely up to 48 hours. Do not open the freezer door if possible.
- For the refrigerated section: Pack milk, other dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, gravy, and spoilable leftovers into a cooler surrounded by ice or dry ice. Inexpensive styrofoam coolers are fine for this purpose.
- Use a digital quick-response thermometer to check the food temperature right before you cook or eat it. Throw away any food that has a temperature of more than 40 degrees Farenheit.
- Follow instructions previously given to you by your medical provider on whether or not you need to keep your medications refrigerated.

For guidelines on refreezing food when the power comes back on, review the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Services fact sheet on Food Safety in an Emergency (www.fsis.usda.gov/pdf/keeping\_food\_safe\_during\_an\_emergency.pdf).

The following resources provide additional information on preparing for emergencies and determining if your food is safe after a power outage.

- Food Safety Tips, FDA
   (www.fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/consumers/ucm077023.htm)
- Power Outage Checklist, American Red Cross (http://www.redcross.org/www-files/Documents/ pdf/Preparedness/PowerOutage.pdf) Provides tips on safely storing your food and a chart to help you determine if your food is still safe.
- Food Safety Office, CDC (www.cdc.gov/foodsafety)
- Comprehensive food safety information (www.longbeach.gov/health)





## Safety Tips During a Power Outage

During prolonged heat waves, electrical outages may occur. When the electricity goes out during a heat wave, you may be faced with more than a temporary inconvenience; there may be a chance for serious health problems, especially if you have medical issues or use medical equipment that runs on electricity.

To prepare for power outages, it's important to have an emergency kit ready, with a working flashlight and a battery powered radio to listen to the news. If a power outage occurs, here are a few things you should do:

The City's Parks and Recreation Centers are designated "cooling centers"

Call Southern California Edison's emergency number (1-800-611-1911) to let them

know you have lost power. A cordless phone may not work during a power outage, so it's good to have a regular phone line or a fullycharged cellular phone in case you need to make calls during the power outage.

Tune into KKJZ 88.1 FM to hear any emergency information the City wants you to know.

If it's hot outside, go to an air conditioned location, such as a friend's house, a store, a shopping mall, the library or a Parks and Recreation Center to stay cool. The City's Parks and Recreation Centers are designated "cooling centers", or places to go to stay cool if people do not have or cannot use their air conditioning. Call 562-570-3100 for locations and hours of operation. Remember to drink plenty of fluids and stay out of the heat to avoid heat illnesses.

